

Collecting Race and Ethnicity Data

Policy

USDA Federal Regulations:

(3) Collection and reporting of racial and ethnic participation data as required by title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, or national origin

FNS Instruction 113:

E Collecting, Reporting, and Retaining Actual Participation Data – The State agency must ensure that access to data collected is limited to authorized personnel. Participants must be asked to self-identify their racial or ethnic group, but only after it has been explained and they understand that the collection of this information is strictly for statistical reporting requirements and has no effect on the determination of their eligibility to participate in the program. If a participant refuses to self-identify his/her racial or ethnic group, visual identification by a program staff member must be used to determine the participant's racial and ethnic category. Selection of one race and one ethnic group is acceptable when local agency staff performs visual identification.

Authority

USDA Federal Regulations: 7 CFR Part 246.8 (a)(3)

FNS Instruction 113: Appendix D, E Collecting, Reporting, and Retaining Actual Participation Data, excerpt

Procedures

The program participation data collected at the time of application includes racial identity and ethnicity. All data regarding racial identity and ethnicity is confidential. Access to this data is limited to authorized local and state WIC personnel.

Applicants must be asked to identify their race and ethnicity, however providing this information is voluntary.

Note: If an applicant does not self-identify, visual observation shall be used to collect the data. Participants must be informed that visual observation will be used to collect the data. Selection of one race and ethnic group is acceptable when local agency staff performs visual identification.

Follow these steps to collect racial identity and ethnicity information.

Step	Action
1	Tell the applicant that information about racial identity and ethnicity is collected strictly for statistical purposes and has no effect on their eligibility for the WIC Program
2	Ask the participant to self-report their ethnicity and record their response in the data system
3	Ask the participant to identify all racial groups that apply and record their response in the data system.

The electronic records containing this data are subject to the record retention requirements described in the policy “Document Retention”.